

COMMON GROUND



JANUARY—FEBRUARY, 1954

VOLUME VIII NUMBER 1

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THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

PATRON — HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH :

Mills in Polders in South Holland

"There are few countries in the world where people have worked as hard as the Dutch at reclaiming land from the sea." (see "Polders and People," p.21.)

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Signed articles express the views of the contributors which are not necessarily those of the Council of Christians and Jews.

The Meaning of History

A. ALTMANN

"History Teaching and Community Relations" was the theme of three addresses at the Annual General Meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews on December 3rd, 1953. The first speaker was Rabbi Dr. A. Altmann, D.Phil., M.A., Communal Rabbi of Manchester. Summaries of the other two addresses, by Father Bernard Basset and the Rev. E. H. Robertson, are given on subsequent pages of this issue of "Common Ground."

THE question of history teaching and community relations gives rise to a number of very knotty problems of a philosophical nature. Is it implied that, for the sake of improving community relations, the teaching of history should be undertaken with a bias towards a better understanding? In other words, do we mean to suggest that it is permissible to present history in such a light as to create better understanding, even if such a presentation might amount to a falsification of history? Surely this cannot be so: there is such a thing as truth for its own sake.

Or it may seem that salvation lies in the issue of a kind of universally valid edition of text-books throughout the whole world, in which the history of all nations and all groups and religions is presented in a purely objective fashion. A committee working under the auspices of UNESCO is actually engaged in the task of preparing history text-books that will offend no one's susceptibilities and will present history in a purely factual way. I humbly submit that that is not a practical possibility. We cannot create a universally valid presentation of history which will satisfy all groups and all traditions, because what is history? Are there such things in history as pure facts? I submit that history is always event plus

interpretation, because the event as such has no value and conveys no meaning unless it is lit up by some source of illumination which throws upon it a certain meaning and significance in a wider context.

National bias in history

Therefore we can only hope to teach history from a certain point of view and embedded in a certain specific tradition. The history of the French Revolution will be presented in France in a different manner from that in which it is presented in England or Germany. The history of the last war will be presented in different ways by future German and British historians. There is a certain measure of interpretative effort which every group must needs bring to bear upon its presentation of history. History is part of a traditional outlook, and each tradition presents its own history in its own way and in its own light.

There is a certain way, for instance, in which Judaism has presented the significance of the Sinaitic revelation and has related all subsequent Jewish development to that central and primary event. Other religions will see the key situation in history in other specific events.

This should not blind us to the possibility of improving the presentation of history, and removing undue bias. In every tradition there are certain emotional aspects attached not only to the contents of its own immediate tradition but also to its relationship with other nations and groups of people. Certain hatreds and other emotional factors have entered into the presentation of the past and cannot be easily eradicated, but an effort should surely be made to be as fair as is humanly possible in presenting another group's history. We should try to enter sympathetically into the tradition with which we are dealing at any given time. A teacher of history who is dealing with Ancient Greece or with early Buddhist history or ancient Islamic history should try not merely to present facts and dates but to enter into the spirit, the standards, the symbolism, of the period concerned; in short, into the whole spiritual structure of that period, so as to enable his pupils to appreciate the inner forces at work in that period of history and so try to arrive at a better understanding and tolerance.

Facts are not sufficient

There is another point which I should like to submit for your consideration. I think that our modern age is apt to try to explain important historical events in terms of what are usually called scientific or historical facts. It will perhaps make clear what I have in mind if I refer to the manner in which so often what are termed the origins of



" HISTORY IS EVENT PLUS INTERPRETATION "

The Civil Wars of English history may be presented as a simple struggle for power, or as a war of ideas in Church and State, with an attempt to understand the issues on both sides. The picture shows a symbolical figure of Oliver Cromwell, from a contemporary engraving. He is attended by Fame, and is trampling on Error and Faction.

Photo: by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

faiths are presented. From time to time books appear on the market in which an endeavour is made to explain the origins of Christianity, of Judaism or of Islam, merely by piecing together certain external facts, relating certain surface events to one another, tracing certain outer contours of developments, and trying in the most rational possible way to "explain" how that faith arose. I submit that an ill service is rendered to the cause of understanding between communities if one group tries to explain away the mystery of the other group by such clumsy efforts, which fail to take into account the spiritual element involved.

Arnold Toynbee was surely right when he pointed out, in his book *Civilisation on Trial*, that in order to understand history it is not enough merely to accumulate facts. Our forbears, who had not such an enormous range of facts at their disposal as we have, with our enlarged historical horizon, had a much better appreciation of historical reality, because they "lived" in the past. They "lived" in Biblical times and they "lived" amongst the Greeks of old, whereas we, with all our knowledge, have blinkers on our eyes and do not see the wood for the trees. For this reason it would appear that what is necessary in the presentation of history is not so much emphasis on facts as emphasis on what lies at the back of those key situations in which something happened which can only be described adequately in terms of the mystery of revelation.

Spiritual events behind history

I think that we suffer today from an undue emphasis on the historical at the expense of what one might call the meta-historical, that which lies behind the purely historical. It has often been asserted that, whereas the old Greeks looked upon reality as enshrined in static being, it was characteristic of the prophetic genius of Israel that it saw history as a moving pattern in which God revealed Himself, and that this outlook, in terms of development, of historical flux, of progress, of evolution, was akin to our modern outlook. I think that this is a misunderstanding of the Biblical and prophetic view. I think that what the Bible really teaches and what the prophets of Israel mainly proclaimed was not a sense of God revealing Himself in a sequence of events, such as a historian might describe and such as might be linked together. The Biblical prophetic teaching of history implies a recognition of the inner spiritual element which underlies the outer history.

Recall such passages in the Bible as the description of Jacob wrestling with the angel in the night, prior to his meeting his brother Esau in broad

daylight. He could meet his brother and become reconciled to him only because in his struggle in the night he had liberated himself from hating and fearing his brother. Again, when Moses held up his hands on the Mount and in this way decided the struggle of his people against the enemy, it was because Moses in his soul gathered strength from his encounter with God and imparted that spiritual strength to his people. That is, I submit, the meaning of those events. There is a hidden, inner, spiritual event which lies at the back of the outer event which the historian might describe.

This is a very important point to be borne in mind when presenting the history not only of Israel but of other nations. I think it was Professor Butterfield who drew an analogy between the reaction of the ancient Israelites to their difficulties, rising to the occasion and not blaming the enemy but blaming themselves for lack of spiritual effort, and the events that took place in Great Britain in the dark years of the last war. It is this creative spiritual effort, rising to the occasion, deciding a historical issue by the inner struggle of the soul, by facing God, facing reality, finding God in the darkness of the night, which alone furnishes the key to the drama that we call history. Once this is recognised we find that this phenomenon goes right through the history of all peoples.

If a teacher of history makes it clear that all men are the children of God, and that all nations and all faiths are facing fundamentally the same great problem, and are trying, each in its own way, to answer their perplexities by some spiritual effort, then I think that a level of understanding and true tolerance will be achieved which will be fruitful in results of mutual love and understanding.

The Teacher's Responsibility

BERNARD BASSET

The Rev. Father Bernard Basset, S.J., followed Dr. Altmann at the Council's Annual General Meeting. Father Basset is a former history master at Stoneyhurst and Beaumont Colleges.

HISTORY is by far the most dangerous subject in the school syllabus, powerful enough to do great good or very much harm. Latin, mathematics, geography have their problems, too, but these are more often concerned with the density of the human head. Very few troubles have come into the world from Latin grammar or lowest common multiples but a whole lifetime of prejudice can be sown by the history master overnight. The germs of class hatred, of racialism, of insularity,

of cynicism towards society are most easily caught in history class. The terrible use made of the Nordic myth by the Nazi Party has painful memories for all of us, but especially for the Jews. It could happen again. We can only guess at the sort of history taught behind the Iron Curtain but anyone who has studied Marx and knows his theory of history will also know that it is bound to lead to intolerance and war. I honestly believe that a ten year conspiracy to teach false history in any country could lead to centuries of injustice without redress. As this could begin in any country at any moment, my first point is that a teacher of history must face his responsibility before he goes into any history class.

Controversy

My second point is this. No good is done by those who, to avoid controversy, try to displace historical theory and give the children only facts. There has been a tendency in this country in the last twenty years to regard as uncharitable any view which might seem to offend anyone else. Teachers cannot mention the Empire because the word "Empire" might offend foreigners; they cannot use the word "foreigner" lest they offend against the brotherhood of nations; they are left only with the history of the Hornsey Borough Council and take their children in long crocodiles to see such exhibitions as "London on Wheels." We cannot doubt that there is much value in the study of the rocking horse through the ages but the amassing of facts and silly facts is not history and, by omitting any philosophy, a vacuum is left in the minds of the children which may later be filled by what is wrong. Catholics, Non-Catholics, Jews, have a right and duty to propose that philosophy of history which they believe to be true. Facts for them will have more or less significance according to their point of view. I can see nothing to censure in a book about the Reformation which is written from the Protestant or Catholic point of view. Good relations between communities will not be forwarded by sliding over controversial facts.

Errors of omission

You may say, "Why, then, is it right for Christians or Jews to expound their theories, and wrong when Marxists do the same?" I would suggest that intolerance, unfairness, bad community relations come not from the theories and philosophy of history but from the errors of omission, the failure to do justice to the other side. If this omission is deliberate, if we suppress or distort facts to support our theory then we are dishonest, and gravely dishonest in history class.

Today, the majority of such omissions are not deliberate but arise from ignorance. How many teachers go into class to teach a period with little more knowledge than can be found in the text-book in their hand. As a result, whole nations and civilisations are never mentioned, children can leave school never having heard the name of Augustine, knowing all about Perkin Warbeck and other small fry. For many Christians today, the history of the Jews ends with the Acts of the Apostles, for many Jews and Christians, Francis Xavier is rather less than a name. It seems to me that to teach children about Perkin Warbeck and to tell them nothing about Francis Xavier or Wesley, is to teach history in the most farcical way. It is, then, the omissions that we have to watch. In fairness to the other side, we must not omit those significant facts which have a rightful place in history, whether we happen to like them or not.

Errors of omission due to ignorance can be corrected on all three levels of history teaching. First—and we should all rejoice at the increase of facilities in this country—the University atmosphere breaks down prejudice and ignorance. At Oxford I had four tutors, one Catholic, one Anglican, one Nonconformist, one Presbyterian. I remained a Jesuit but I learned from them all a great sympathy and understanding for the other side.

Teachers in training

The University training offers one of the very best means of combating prejudice due to ignorance. The Training Colleges for teachers are also of the highest importance. After two years the history teacher goes out to teach many classes on many different epochs and the matter acquired at College is the chief source of the history he will teach. At the Colleges therefore a serious duty rests on the authorities to see that the students are offered a wide horizon. Enormous good is done when at a Training College a wide variety of lecturers from all denominations and creeds are invited to put before the students the individual point of view. I have had the chance on occasion to take part in a theological Brains Trust in a Training College and all those taking part could appreciate the good that was done.

Examinations

Thirdly there is the problem of the examination system which tends to limit history to certain key periods and questions. Text-book writers then write their books to cope with these pre-determined questions, to answer the kind of question which is bound to be set. As India, Asia, the Jews, the Catholics, are not likely to feature in a question, they are also



"FOR MANY THE HISTORY OF THE JEW'S ENDS WITH THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES..."
 The story of Jewish contributions to Western European civilisation is unknown to many. This picture shows a medieval Jewish scholar, Farrachius, receiving (on the right), an Arabic medical treatise, and, on the left, presenting his Latin translation to Charles of Anjou, in 1279. Jewish learning was largely instrumental in bringing Arabic and Eastern knowledge to Europe during the Renaissance

excluded from the books. This is a serious problem, recognised today more clearly than it was twenty years ago. Perhaps the Council of Christians and Jews could use some influence in obtaining a wider and wider choice of subjects for the examination papers.

Danger of early judgments

I might end with a warning about the teaching of history to the very young. At this age children have no facts at all and prejudice is sown when we teach them judgments by heart. What then should we do ? Are we to fall back on the history of the Hornsey Borough Council until they are of an age to judge for themselves ? I would suggest that even in the earlier years at school much can be done by taking such subjects as death, religious practice, worship through the ages, and thus present the children at the earliest age with an interest in the problems which must always face men of every age. I myself once taught boys of eleven for four years. As I had a free hand in the matter I was able to experiment with these subjects and discovered a very lively interest in the children and quite excellent results.

The conclusion of this address is that history is a dynamic subject capable of great good and great harm. Harm will not be avoided by teaching only silly facts and skipping all controversy. We must each teach history as we see it and our own philosophy of history is bound to colour our approach. Unfairness and harm comes from the omissions, and where these are due to ignorance every care must be taken in University and Training College and in the examination papers to correct the fault. Sympathy and understanding for the other side might help to avoid many tragic problems which today are due to bad history, the problems of Africa and Ireland, Palestine and Spain.

Incidental History

E. H. ROBERTSON

The Rev. E. H. Robertson, M.A., B.Sc., Assistant Head of Religious Broadcasting at the B.B.C., gave the third talk at the Council's Annual General Meeting, on the theme "History Teaching and Community Relations."

THE first of these talks was concerned with those who have to think out a philosophy of history; the second was concerned with the teachers of history in colleges and schools; and now I am concerned with those who never read a book after they leave school, but who are taught history all the time by films and plays, the radio and the Press. The Press has a special way of teaching history by means of little footnotes.

Those little footnotes can be far more effective than a re-written text-book. Words, too, have a tremendous power. They have an emotive power. Someone has classified them as "rah" words and "boo" words.

If I remember my own boyhood in East London, there are four words which flash into my mind and which influenced my thinking. One was the word "puritan," the meaning of which had no resemblance to the puritan movement in history. People who were miserable were labelled "puritans." Then we used to talk about "Chinks," and we thought of them as very dangerous and cruel people. Any chance of our ever acquiring the right attitude to China was destroyed by that one word "Chink." Again, although we grew up with a less unsympathetic attitude to the Left Wing than people in most other parts of England, the word "Bolshie" was in common use among us and the way in which we visualised a "Bolshie" destroyed any chance of our understanding the rise of the Communist movement. We also talked about "Shylock," as some people still do, and that influenced our whole attitude to Jews. No amount of school teaching can touch the power of these words, and we should do well to look carefully at the way in which words are used.

Effect of custom

We have also to consider the strength of custom. Take as an example the way in which we celebrate Guy Fawkes' Day. I enjoy letting off fireworks with my children, but think of the way in which we have kept Guy Fawkes alive without ever trying to get rid of him. How many of us have been asked by a child: "Who was Guy Fawkes?" and how many of us have taken down the recent volume by Hugh Ross Williamson and explained to the child exactly who Guy Fawkes was? This kind of custom can engrain history more effectively than a history lesson can. And how disappointed the children are when you do not burn the guy! It is no good trying to put something else in his place!

To the Jews I should like to say this: What is the value of your Purim Festival, when you arouse a certain feeling for a gentleman called Haman? You might ask yourselves what effect it is having on growing children so far as their attitude to others is concerned, and whether you are not fostering a hatred for Gentiles. It is good to keep alive some customs, but we should watch, particularly in our relationship with our younger people who are growing up, the way in which we keep our customs alive.

In addition to our customs, there are our days of national significance. I do not know how long some of them will go on, but we are capable of twisting history every time we celebrate a great day in our history. I remember the surprise I got when I first talked to a German

about Waterloo and he had not heard of a man called Wellington. There is another way of explaining Waterloo, in terms of a gentleman called Blucher, whom some of us have never heard of. We should do well to consider our days of national significance soberly when they come.

History from fiction

As well as being influenced by words and customs, we are influenced by films and plays. I think sometimes that Shakespeare has taught us far more history than Macaulay. We can learn a good deal more, or we think we can, from a historical play than from a careful study of a history textbook and at least it is easier. In this Coronation year we have brought back Elizabeth I in play and film and also in talk and conversation. We have talked of the New Elizabethan Age, and some of us have perverted history in the doing of it. We have made the first Elizabethan Age as glorious as we wanted it to be. The films have given to us colourful and enjoyable entertainment, but they have given us pictures of history which are perverted, not deliberately but simply in order to make a better film. And how many people who have read no history know anything of the French Revolution except the escapes of aristocrats from the guillotine?

If you want to get a little detached from this, look carefully at the way in which the Russians have used films and you will see the way in which we are probably using them. How many times has a shot appeared in Russian films showing the people coming peacefully to the palace and the palace guard driving them down the steps and shooting them? I have seen it five times in Russian films. That kind of thing teaches history in its own way.

Broadcasting problems

Now there comes the added power of radio and television, the added power of its sheer quantity. This can be used in a good way. There was a recent series of broadcasts in the Children's Hour on the Queens of England, and that very difficult queen whose name was Mary had to be dealt with. There are different views and different attitudes to Mary. One might well have thought it a good thing to move carefully between the use of a certain unsavoury adjective and the tendency to canonisation. What was in fact done was clever. Something was revived which almost all of us had forgotten; it was the rhyme about Mary: "Mary, Mary, quite contrary, How does your garden grow?" It brought out a sympathy and an understanding for the difficulties of this unfortunate queen. That rhyme was written about her, and I think that children got a healthier attitude to her because of it. Similarly, with regard to Guy Fawkes. There

is a traditional view with its variants and there is the Hugh Ross Williamson view. So television gave both in the course of a week. It may be that that is the best way to deal with controversial history.

There is one other field to which I should like to refer: the field of the historical novel. There are quite well-informed people—I mean well-informed so far as politics and economics are concerned—whose only history reading is the historical novel, with all its over-simplifications. What has that done in the way of teaching them history and with our relations one to another?

It is because we are aware of the wide influence of words and customs, films, plays, radio, television and books, that we need to watch the situation and do what we can to prevent our philosophy being lost as the radio or television is turned on, the cinema entered or the novel opened.

A New Hebrew Bible

SIR LEON SIMON

Sir Leon Simon, C.B., tells the story behind the production of a new edition of the Bible in Hebrew, by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Sir Leon was until recently Chairman of the Hebrew University (Magnes) Press.

THE "Jerusalem Bible," which appeared last May, is the partial fulfilment of a long-cherished project of its publishers, the Magnes Press of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. It is the first of the many Hebrew texts of the Scriptures published in the Holy Land which is not merely a photographic reproduction of an existing printed edition. Though photography played an important part in its production, its distinguishing feature is that the camera was brought into play only after a very large number of alterations had been made, invisibly, in the printed text which was selected as the basis.

These alterations were the result of some years of work by a distinguished Bible scholar, Professor Umberto Cassuto, a native of Florence, who in 1939 left Rome University, where he was Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Semitic Philology, to occupy the Chair of Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The object of the University Press was neither to produce a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible, nor simply to reprint a standard text. The aim in view was to issue in the Holy Land a Bible according to the traditional, Masoretic, text established by Ben Asher about a thousand years ago, which would, it was hoped, find its way into Jewish homes throughout the world; but it was desired to achieve as high a degree of accuracy as possible in the presentation of the traditional text, and hence the need for a new recension by a Biblical

scholar: for in the nature of things small discrepancies have crept into the various manuscripts in which that text is preserved, and there are many matters in which a modern editor has to exercise his own judgment in deciding whether one manuscript or another should be followed.

Manuscripts examined

Professor Cassuto examined a number of manuscripts of the Bible, including one at Aleppo, which was widely believed to have been written by the hand of Ben Asher himself. Actually Cassuto came to the conclusion that this claim was without foundation, and that the Aleppo manuscript was of no special value. His investigations led him to regard the Cairo manuscript of the Prophetic books as the most reliable for that section of the Bible; and for the rest he gave the palm to the manuscript of Leningrad. He did not, however, accept the text given in either of these two sources precisely as it stood. He had views of his own as to the principles which the Masoretic authorities had followed in regard to such matters as the position of vowel-points and accents (cantillation signs) and the insertion or omission of the stroke (*metheg*) which indicates a subsidiary accent. Where the manuscript which he was in general following was not true to these principles as he understood them, or presented a reading which seemed to him unacceptable for some other reason, he did not consider himself bound by it.

It has been said that there was no intention of producing a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible; and it must be emphasised that Cassuto's recension differs from the current printed versions of the Masoretic text only in minute details, which for the most part are not discernible except by the eye of an expert who is on the look-out for them. A vowel-point or an accent will be moved the tiniest fraction of a centimetre this way or that; the accent will be duplicated in the case of a word of several syllables; a *metheg* will be inserted or omitted. Variants of those types form the overwhelming majority; much less frequently there is an unimportant difference of spelling, or perhaps a variation as regards *k'ri* and *k'tib*. Clearly there could not be any more substantial departures than these from the established version of the sacred text, unless tradition was to be disregarded.

Textual variations

The number of variations which Cassuto introduced into the text seems, in view of the very narrow limits imposed by adherence to tradition, positively astounding. When these variations came to be superimposed by hand on the printed text which Cassuto selected as best

suit to his purpose—the “Minor” edition of C.D. Ginsburg—they were found to number something like twenty thousand. And yet one may read chapter after chapter of the Cassuto text without realising that it differs at all from Ginsburg’s, or from the text of M. H. Letteris, from which again that of Ginsburg differs only in details of no significance to the ordinary reader.

Professor Cassuto died suddenly in December 1951, and it was left to his brother-in-law, Professor E. S. Hartom, who had worked in close association with him for many years, to complete his work, to see that the alterations were correctly entered into the Ginsburg text before printing, and to deal with the proofs. Had he lived, Cassuto would no doubt have explained, for the benefit of the experts, the principles by which he had been guided in his recension of the Masoretic text. That he was not spared to do this is a loss to Bible scholarship; but it does not of course affect the value of the Jerusalem Bible for ordinary people, for whose use it is intended. It is a well-produced and handsome volume of 1337 pages, a little heavy perhaps, but convenient in size and very legible.

The use of photography was no part of the original plan of the Jerusalem Bible. It was intended to carry out the type-setting as well as the printing in the Holy Land, and in fact a special type was designed and cut for the purpose. Ill-fortune has dogged the enterprise almost from the outset, and, on the principle of the half-loaf, the Hebrew University Press has thought it better to produce the Cassuto text by a process of grafting and photography than to wait perhaps many more years in order to present it in all the beauty of the special type. The substance after all matters more than the form. It is, however, the purpose of the Press to carry out the original idea in full as soon as circumstances permit.

Understanding between Races

MICHAEL SCOTT

The Rev. Michael Scott, whose championship of the cause of coloured races is well known, was one of the speakers in the B.B.C. Third Programme series on Toleration. “Common Ground” welcomes comments and correspondence from readers on this and other articles in the series.

IN Britain, throughout the violent history of our adolescence as a nation, there were many racial and religious controversies which resulted in the most bitter persecution and hatred between our peoples, who were racially very closely akin—if racial is the word to use of such small subdivisions of the human race. The ages of faith were often ages of intolerance. The stronger the convictions of some of our forbears the

more imperative it seemed to them to persuade other people, if necessary even against their own will and understanding. But to try to force the will and the understanding is to violate human nature. The will and the understanding are part of the very soul of man and the most precious possession of the human race. It is no sign of faith, but rather lack of faith and lack of confidence in God and man, to want to impose a limited pattern of thought and culture on all human beings.

The great age of persecution

We are not yet through the great age of persecution. Perhaps we are entering a new phase of it—that of political inquisition and thought-conditioning by means of propaganda and selecting truth. Doctrines of racial supremacy, too, violate the human will and understanding and can claim no biological foundation. Similarly, a theory of man as a creature of automatic responses violates the human will and understanding, and the values which flow from the conception of the human race in a divine creative will and intelligible purpose. These cannot be violated, as contemporary history shows, without endangering civilised existence on this planet.

But what terrors, what inhumanities of man to man, have been committed in the name of religion and the name of Christ! These have been exceeded in our day only by persecutions in the name of race and politics. The organised destruction of the Jews in the west is paralleled by the organised destruction of the political opponents of communism in the east.

Population problems

If Germany, with all her culture, and a comparatively small race problem, could be driven mad by the propaganda of a theory of race, we must face the possibilities of the future when the population of our world is increasing by 25,000,000 every year and our preoccupation with armaments is preventing our development of the natural resources of the earth, and there is consequent land hunger and over-population. When people are hungry and frightened, or even humiliated, they tend to fall a prey to the violent and irrational, though not only then by any means. These are problems for the politicians and the Church, and the universities.

But toleration, especially between races, is a product of understanding. People are not tolerant of things which they fear and hate, or even of those whom they believe to be rivals for something which is vital to their existence.

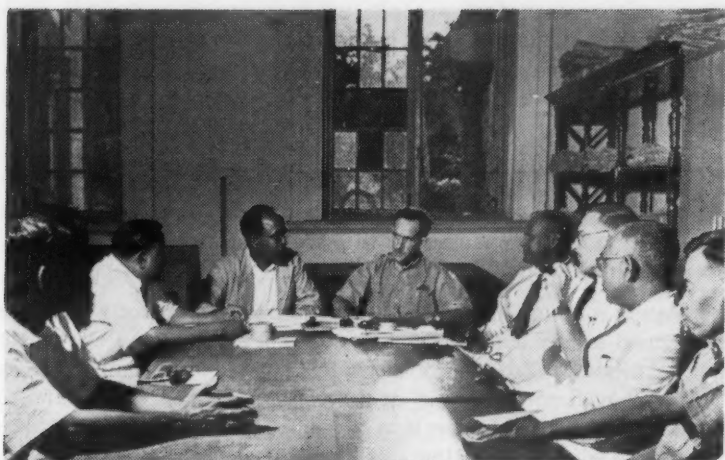
Experience with a city council

I once asked a certain city council, in a country which has a problem of race in an acute form, for permission to hire the city hall for an African choir to sing before a European audience. I had been living in one of the worst slums in the world, on the outskirts of one of the wealthiest gold-mining cities in the world. And I hoped by this means it would be possible to convey to people who really do not understand, although they live very near them, some of the great positive qualities which the African people have; and I thought if they were given the opportunity of expressing these, their abounding good humour, their great gift for music, singing, and rhythm, this might help to bring about a better understanding of their problems of existence by those who could, if they willed, do something about them.

I had to go and plead the case before a meeting of the city council. When the councillors had finished their questioning, one of them summed the matter up: "so it seems you want to hire the city hall and put a native choir there on the stage to be admired by our white citizens. You want to teach our white girls to look up to and admire native art, music, and singing. This, you must know, is one of the first steps towards breaking down racial barriers, and bringing about miscegenation of the races." So the application was accordingly refused because of the problem one so often comes back to: miscegenation. Would you like your sister to marry a native?

Liberalism not to blame

This is taken by many people in Africa as a final answer, the justification for maintaining racial barriers and for "keeping the natives in their place," as they say. Many of those who ask such a question are oblivious of the fact that the mixed race in South Africa has not come about through the desire of African men to marry white women, or through tradition of liberalism in that country, or through the teaching of the Church about marriage. It came about originally through slave owners cohabiting with their slave women, and subsequently it has been mainly through European men cohabiting illicitly with non-European women. So that the question about our sisters is really rather misdirected: those few cases of marriage between African men and European women which have been blessed by the Church according to her teaching, do not account for the existence of nearly 1,000,000 people of mixed race in South Africa alone. The mixing of the races happens to some extent inevitably in any case, and is just as likely from a situation in which one race is oppressed by another, even if attempts are made to force them to live in separate



"CALL FOR CO-OPERATION"

Africa's problems are such that all races must work together for the common good.

areas, as in a situation where both races are enabled to progress and to understand one another, and to behave with self-respect and mutual respect for one another.

Clearly a strong cause of intolerance is fear—fear of competition in employment and the undercutting of wages by the use of cheap African labour. The only long-term answer to that is to regulate wages and standards so that those acquiring skills and trades and professions should be able to receive a fair wage, and live by common standards of civilised life. If people of one racial group prefer to live with members of the same group that is all right, but to enforce segregation, especially when one race is always relegated to the slums and shanty towns, is no answer to the problem, and must result in the undermining of civilised standards for a country. Disease knows no colour bars, and it is impossible for one people to oppress another without losing eventually its own freedom and integrity.

Opportunity to become civilised

In Africa we have the task of building a civilisation which, as Rhodes said, will give equal rights for all civilised men. That presupposes opportunity for all men to become civilised. That means learning to

appreciate the values of other peoples, and the contribution they can make to a life which owes so much of its poetry and drama and colour to the existence of variety. The reduction of all humanity to a mid-nineteenth-century European culture would not really be civilisation at all. Nor is it possible, in the conditions of a modern industrial state, to keep a race separate and organised in separate economic and industrial systems. Therefore, human beings have to learn to respect one another, and our educational system should aim at showing people why they should respect one another, what others have to contribute, and have contributed, towards our civilisation.

Again, it is not enough to understand. People do not want to be understood in any condescending sense. They want to be allowed to express themselves, to control themselves, and to work out their own destiny, though not necessarily at the expense of others; they prefer to stand up for themselves rather than be uplifted. That is the great problem of multi-racial societies. How can people be enabled to live and work together without their being deprived of so much that is essential to their own identity? Then the attitude of contempt on the part of one race brings its own reaction on the part of the other, so that they tend to reject even what is good in the culture and way of life of the oppressor in their necessity to free themselves from their oppression. And then it happens again in reaction that nationalism must come first, civilisation second, in the churches, in the schools, in the teaching of history. On the other hand, when we hear about the tragic consequences of racial conflict we ought to remember all the pioneer work that is being done both by Africans and Europeans in trying to find a better way for the future than that of creating racial antagonism. Especially is this so in the sphere of medicine and education.

Racial segregation no answer

Racial segregation is not an answer to the problem of race relations. It seems to postpone the difficult task of learning to understand one another and live at peace and work together, even if one's colour or smell or the shape of one's face is different. Segregation breeds mistrust and resentment, and so far from preserving so-called white standards of living may have just the opposite effect, through African labour in segregated industries. In many parts of Africa God is being mocked by the practice of segregation in the churches, though sometimes there is a language question, and a social question. But if people are good enough and clean enough to wait on one at table in one's house, bath one's children, cook one's

food, they are good and clean enough to worship the same God in the same building.

But what is needed in Africa are more and more practical projects in which people of different race can learn in practice the advantages of co-operation; more schools and universities, where people can grow up in understanding and first-hand knowledge of both the good and the bad in one another, in work and in recreation. There really is no other way towards toleration and peaceful co-existence. It may be the hard and the long way, but the Bechuanas have a saying: "The shortest way is the longest way round."

Polders and People

W. W. SIMPSON

IT is a curiously novel sensation to spend a day walking and driving over the bed of the sea, or to be more precise, over what until eleven years ago was the sea bottom. Yet that is how I spent one day of my holiday, in the company of a group of students from some 14 or 15 different countries. It was in Holland, of course. Indeed it could hardly have been anywhere else, for there are few countries in the world where people have worked as hard as the Dutch at reclaiming land from the sea.

This particular area was the Noordoost—or North-East—Polder, the first of four areas which it is proposed eventually to reclaim from the Zuider Zee. Work on this particular project began in 1937. By September 1942 the engineers were ready to pump out the water from the area enclosed by a dyke which had taken five years to build. Very soon an entirely new territory extending over more than 180 square miles was ready for the initial stage of the work which was to transform it into what it is now—a land of fertile fields and attractively built farm houses; a land with five villages and a central town already well on the way to completion; a land where every prospect pleases, and where the people clearly have a mind to work.

Human problems

It would be impossible not to be impressed with the amazing scientific and technical achievements that brought this new land into being. Even more interesting, however, are the human problems to which the whole project has given rise. Take the little town of Urk, for example, which until eleven years ago had maintained a sturdy independence on a small island well out in the Zuider Zee. Today its inhabitants are still

trying to adjust themselves to the fact of having been absorbed into the mainland. Traditional customs are dying out. Fishermen who had been brought up to fish the shallower waters of the Zuider Zee have now to adapt themselves as well as their craft to the very different proposition of fishing the deeper and more dangerous waters of the North Sea.

Meanwhile, the planners of the Polder have had to decide on what basis to select the "colonists" who were to develop this new area of State owned and State controlled territory. To what extent, for example, should religious considerations be taken into account? Should the new community be built up in the same proportion of Protestants and Roman Catholics as at present exist on the mainland? On the economic side was the question as to whether the shopkeeper in the new villages and in the central town of the Polder should be protected against competition from the larger and older established businesses on the mainland? And turning from the present to the future it is interesting to speculate on the possible future relations between an agricultural community working on farms owned by the State and a community of farmers which has for so long enjoyed a system of free enterprise on the mainland. There is, in fact, a very real sense in which this new area of what can only be described as colonial development may be regarded as a microcosm of many of the larger problems in the wider sphere of international relations.

Mixture of peoples

These, certainly, were the things that chiefly interested the little group of some two dozen students with whom I visited the Polder. For the group was in itself a sort of microcosm of the peoples of the world. It contained an African (a teacher from a village school in Kenya) and a Chinese; an Indian and a Pakistani. Egypt too was represented, as were also Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy and Spain, France, Germany, Holland and the United Kingdom, as well as the Republic of Cuba and San Domingo in the New World, and the Philippine Republic in the Pacific area.

These people were not, of course, in any sense officially representative of the countries from which they came. On the contrary, they were a delightfully informal and unofficial group of people, mostly students, with a few teachers, lawyers and research workers besides, all of them members of an international Seminar, meeting under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee. It was one of a number of similar Seminars to be held this year in Europe, in the United States, and in the Far East. Not all who took part in the Seminar were members of the Society of Friends. In fact, very few, even of the staff members and lecturers, were Quakers. Though this may seem at first sight rather paradoxical, it is

entirely in keeping with the conviction of Friends that to bring people together from different national religious and racial backgrounds, and to give them an opportunity of getting to know each other, and of discussing their respective problems and points of view, is in itself a real contribution to the betterment of human relations.

Informal study

No conditions are attached to participation in these Seminars, nor is any attempt made at indoctrination either with Quaker or any other particular set of teaching or ideas. Those who participate are invited simply to consider together some of the issues involved in laying the foundation of a peaceful world order. This year particular aspects of this general subject were assigned to particular Seminars. Thus, for example, some of the European groups were discussing the historic and contemporary concepts and applications of democracy; regional and universal approaches to political and economic organisations of peoples; and at a Seminar in Yugoslavia, the meeting of East and West.

The members of the Dutch Seminar were invited to study some of the economic aspects of international understanding, with particular reference to problems of colonialism and imperialism. That, no doubt, is why its members were so interested in the way in which the problems were being tackled on the North-East Polder.

But the day we spent on the former sea bed was only one of the twenty-one days we were together in the Seminar, which was housed in a delightful conference centre not very far from the town of Zwolle.

The daily programme was simple in its broad outlines. Breakfast was followed by a period of quiet for meditation and prayer. Then came the morning's work—a lecture, followed by a general discussion. Afternoons were free, and after tea came another lecture or talk, either by one of the leaders or by one of the participants, on the life and the problems of his own country. Members of the group were also responsible for some of the domestic "chores," including washing up after all the meals—a very healthy proviso, for it is extraordinary how much one can learn from working with people at the kitchen sink !

For some reason or other (perhaps because it was too hot or we were too tired earlier in the day) volley ball—our principal outdoor game—was always played after supper. There is nothing very extraordinary about that except that even volley ball is rather more exciting when all or most of the members of both teams come from different countries, particularly when, for example, an Italian and a Yugo-Slav are playing

together on the same side. But it was so much more than just a matter of playing games, for there was one evening, for example, when, after the game was ended, one of the lecturers, an Italian Professor of Economics, outlined what seemed to him to be the major issues involved in the Trieste problem and suggested a basis of approach which proved as acceptable to the Yugoslavs present as it did to the Italians.

Towards understanding

There is, of course, a vast difference between this kind of friendly and informal discussion and the formal conferences that take place at official levels, all too often in the full blaze of a not very helpful publicity. But surely the Friends who are responsible for planning these Seminar programmes are right in their basic assumption that if those who are likely to be tomorrow's leaders are able to meet and get to know each other today, their approach to some of tomorrow's problems may be more hopeful and constructive.

For my own part, as one whose good fortune it has been to have some part in the actual running of this Seminar programme during the past four summers, I can recall with gratitude students, teachers, social workers, lawyers, economists, psychologists, and indeed potential leaders of all kinds in almost every part of the world whom I have come to know, to understand and to respect as a result of the Seminar experience. They have opened for me many windows through which I have been able to get some new light on all sorts of international problems.

India's problem

I still vividly recall, for example, the response of an Indian participant this summer to an invitation to give the group a thumb-nail sketch of his country's problems. "There are certain things," he said, "without which we cannot live; but there are also certain things without which we do not care to live. Starvation is not our real problem for we have starved before. Nor is suffering the problem for we measure progress by suffering. Our real problem arises from the fact that India is not merely a country but an attitude of mind which we are anxious to preserve whilst at the same time we develop our contact with the West."

An over-simplified statement? Perhaps! But it has in it a large measure of truth, not only in relation to India, but to a great many other peoples besides. For it was not so much by the things they said that the participants made their most effective contributions to the success of the Seminar. What they were mattered so much more. I shrewdly suspect, for example, that long after they have forgotten the things he said, many

of the participants will remember the teacher from Kenya, as being in himself the very personification of many of the problems of East Central Africa today. But that surely is true of all real meeting of people from wherever they come, and it is perhaps one of the most valuable things about this particular kind of Seminar that its members learn so much about their respective national, cultural and religious backgrounds from all sorts of quite unconscious personal attitudes and reactions.

We began on the Polder. Let us go back there for a moment. I was reminded while I was in Holland of an old saying to the effect that God created all the world, except the Low Countries, and the Dutch made them! It was not, I was happy to discover, a Dutch saying! Indeed, the one Dutchman, an official of the Polder administration to whom I quoted it was emphatic in his rejection of its implication. "We have worked hard," he said, "and we have so far succeeded, but we could not have done what we have without the help and blessing of God himself!"

The Polder, I suggested, was in some sense a microcosm of the world's problems. The group of students who visited it was in much the same way a microcosm of the peoples of the world. When those people have learned to look at their problems in the spirit and intention of those who launched the Seminar programme, and with the faith and enthusiasm of those who reclaimed the Polder from the sea and made it fertile, we shall, I believe, have made some progress in the direction of laying the foundations of a lasting peace.

Commentary

● Reflections on Kenya

The Archbishop of Canterbury, presiding at the Annual General Meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews on December 3rd, moved from the Chair the adoption of a Report on the year's work presented on behalf of the Executive Committee. "This Report," said the Archbishop, "deals with matters of immense spiritual peril and significance all over the world. Unfortunately it is only too true that the thing for which we stand, an informed and charitable tolerance between rival ideologies of one kind and another, is fighting for its life under many different guises and forms in almost every part of the world. We cannot but have on our consciences the horrors that are happening and the threatenings that there are to those principles upon which Jew and Christian stand unitedly: the love of God and the respect due to every child of God, to every human being, who should enjoy his proper civic freedoms and religious liberties.

There cannot be absent from the minds of any of you the fact that this particular problem comes up in one of its most hateful and terrible forms in Kenya at the present time, amongst the Kikuyu and in the dealings with Mau Mau, where dreadful things are done, calculated to raise indignation in every honest heart, yet those who defend the true dignities of man are themselves under terrible strain, in defending those dignities, to offend against them. I think we must have nothing but deep concern, sympathy and understanding for those people of many races who are living under such strain at the present moment in Kenya, praying that nothing shall be done to spoil the honour and the Christian principles of those Europeans and Africans who are engaged in the task of bringing back order, justice and freedom to a threatened country."

● **A tender modern plant**

Speaking in the House of Commons on December 18th in the adjournment debate on religious persecution in Poland, Mr. Chuter Ede reminded members, "how essential it is that those of us who believe in religious toleration should understand how tender and modern a plant it actually is and how essential it is to stand up for it wherever it is assailed." The occasion was a significant one. Members from both sides of the House and representing many different religious groups, Christian and Jewish alike, were unanimous in their condemnation of the recent renewal of religious persecution in Poland.

The seriousness of that situation, already the subject of a comment in *Common Ground*, is only too painfully obvious. The problem is always to know what to do. Diplomatic representations can, and no doubt will, be made. Of more far-reaching importance however, was a suggestion contained in a two-minute intervention in the debate by Mr. Hugh Delargy, the member for Thurrock, that, "Her Majesty's Government, through their representatives at the United Nations, might consider the setting up of an *ad hoc* Committee to study religious persecution in Poland, or even in Spain, or anywhere it may take place."

This reference to Spain was interesting, for it appears that when the original motion calling attention to the Polish situation was put down on the Order Paper a number of members put down an amendment, "calling attention to and deploring the punishment without trial of certain individuals in Spain." Commenting on this fact in the course of the debate, Mr. Christopher Hollis, the member for Devizes and a distinguished Roman Catholic said, "it is entirely proper that if there is injustice they should make their protests against it. The fact that there is injustice in one part of the world does not make it right that we should not make a protest against injustice in another part of the world."

It was gratifying, therefore, to note that in winding up the debate Mr. Dodds-Parker, the Joint Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, made special reference to Mr. Delargy's suggestion which he promised to follow up, and to "let him know whether we see any chance of taking successful action along those lines." There will be many others besides Mr. Delargy who will be interested in the outcome of those enquiries !

In the meantime we may reflect, with Mr. Leslie Lever, the member for Manchester, Ardwick, who spoke on behalf of his fellow Jews, "how fortunate we are to live in a country where there is tolerance and where men and women can practise their faith without let or hindrance" and share his hope that "Her Majesty's Government will lose no time in making representations to the Polish authorities that freedom of conscience will be restored to Poland so that she may occupy the great place in the comity of nations we wish for her."

● Tomorrow's citizens

There is a certain paradox about the Christmas holidays. They not only bring with them family reunions and a round of festivities and children's parties; they have also become the traditional season for educational conferences. Perhaps some antidote is required after a surfeit of jollification. "How did you enjoy Christmas?" a parent was asked a few weeks ago. "As much as was possible with four young children in the house!" was his somewhat sombre reply.

Some of these "children" have, however, taken the matter into their own hands. Each year about 2,000 boys and girls from the Grammar and Independent Schools converge on the Central Hall, Westminster, and spend a week of their holidays in discussing some aspect of the international scene. The conference is organised with the utmost efficiency by the Council for Education in World Citizenship. This year the subject treated was "The Challenge of Africa" and every problem concerning this "little known continent" came up for examination and the closest scrutiny.

It is an inspiring sight and one that belies the modern pessimist or cynic to see the hall packed with boys and girls giving serious, one might say animated, attention to problems so vitally affecting the future of the Commonwealth and world peace. The opportunity to hear so many experts on these problems and the views of some of the most enlightened minds about them, African as well as British, must surely bear fruit when these young people are grown citizens and have to make important decisions of policy themselves.

About Ourselves

● The Annual General Meeting on December 3rd was one of the best meetings ever held under the Council's auspices. Certainly it was one of the largest—a day before the meeting, with acceptances arriving by every post, a larger hall was secured, which was filled almost to capacity. Summaries of the main addresses, on the theme "History Teaching and Community Relations," are printed as main articles in this issue of *Common Ground*, and the remarks of the Archbishop of Canterbury, after moving the adoption of the Executive Committee's Report on the year's work, form a "Commentary" paragraph. The Executive's Report, presented by Mr. Percy Bartlett, was as follows:—

In the general field of the Council's day to day activities, namely in meetings, discussions, lectures, etc.; research into text books; and publications, especially *Common Ground*, there has been considerable progress and encouraging reactions during the past year.

Secondly, bearing in mind always the fact that the Council's primary concern is with group relations, and especially Christian-Jewish relations in this country, the Executive has given attention also to certain matters in the international field especially from the point of view of their bearing on relations here at home. Outstanding among such matters during the past year have been the following:

- (a) the case of the Finaly children;
- (b) religious persecution, and especially the recent attacks on Roman Catholic leaders in Poland;
- (c) the recent disturbances on the Jordan-Israel frontier.

THE FINALY CHILDREN

The Council's Religious Liberty Group at the Executive's request undertook a special study of this difficult problem, in connection with which the Secretary was sent to Paris on a "fact finding" mission. There was of course no question of the Council seeking to intervene in a situation in another country, but only to obtain

such an understanding of the facts as might enable it to help in building up an informed public opinion in our own.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN POLAND.

The Religious Liberty Group has also made some study of the position of Protestant minorities in Roman Catholic countries, and has given particular attention to the position of religious communities under Communist régimes. In this latter connection the Group recommended to the Executive that particular notice should be taken of recent attacks on Roman Catholic leaders in Poland. A letter was therefore addressed to the Apostolic Delegate in this country asking him to convey to His Holiness the Pope an expression of the Council's sense of deep sympathy with the Cardinal-Primate of Poland and his faithful people, the assurance of their prayers, and the pledge of the Council's determination to continue to work by all the means at its disposal for the establishment of those true liberties and religious freedoms which are so essential a part of the gift of God to men.

ISRAEL-JORDAN FRONTIER

The Executive Committee, and, at the Committee's request the Council's Middle East Group, have given most careful attention to the present situation in the relations between Israel and the Arab States. They view the deplorable incidents on the Jordan-Israel frontier, culminating in the recent tragic massacre of some 60 inhabitants of the Jordan village of Qibya, with a sense of grave anxiety.

The Committee has noted the resolution of the Security Council which not only expresses the strongest censure of that particular action as one "which can only prejudice the chances of that peaceful settlement which both parties in accordance with the Charter are bound to seek," but also takes note of the fact that "there is substantial evidence of the crossing of the demarcation line by unauthorised persons, often resulting in acts of

violence." The Committee welcomes the Security Council's appeal to both Israel and Jordan to do all in their power "to prevent all acts of violence on either side of the frontier and to abide by their obligations under the general Armistice Agreement and the resolutions of the Security Council."

At the same time the Executive believe that the closely inter-related problems in the whole field of relations between Israel and the Arab States cannot be solved piece-meal and that there is need for new, comprehensive and constructive remedies. In view, however, of the divergencies of the claims of the parties concerned, of the complexity of the issues at stake and the depth of feelings aroused, the Arab States and Israel can hardly be expected to come together of their own accord. The Executive believe therefore that the United Nations should accept responsibility for mediation and for bringing the two parties to a common table.

The Executive also feel that while they have neither the authority nor the competence to propose detailed solutions of these grave problems, they have a particular responsibility to help members of both the Christian

and Jewish communities in this country to approach these matters in the light of those moral and ethical principles which form the common ground between their respective religious traditions. In this way the Council of Christians and Jews hopes to make some contribution to the creation of such a climate of public opinion as may help in bringing about a peaceful settlement.

● The Conference of Educational Associations which meets annually in the Christmas holidays dealt this year with "The Development of Loyalties." Our Chairman, Canon Raven, was its President and gave the opening address. For the Council's meeting which took place on December 31st, 1953, we were fortunate in securing as speaker the Very Rev. A. R. Wallace, Dean of Exeter and formerly Headmaster of Sherborne. As an experienced teacher he was able to give much expert advice on "Education in Group Loyalties and its Dangers." Between forty and fifty people were present and the chair was taken by Mr. L. G. Montefiore, O.B.E., who kindly consented to preside at short notice, owing to the indisposition of Professor Lauwerys.

Book Notes

Belief and Action

By Viscount Samuel

(Pan Books Ltd., 2s. 0d.)

This admirable little book, first published in 1937, has been revised and brought up-to-date, and will supply a need, if anything more urgently felt today than when it was first written. It attempts to provide a working everyday philosophy for the ordinary man and, as far as this is humanly possible, succeeds in its supremely difficult task. There is hardly a person who, confronted with the perplexities and frustrations of the modern world, will not go forward on life's journey with a surer step and a more buoyant spirit from having tasted a little of the sanity, tolerance and confidence which are the main ingredients of Lord Samuel's outlook.

Many current problems are dealt with in this book, such as those created by the rapid advance of science and technology, the absence of freedom in a large part of the world, the growth of nationalism and the decay of family life. But, perhaps, the one that interests Lord Samuel most is the future of religion and here he has much to say that will commend itself to people of all denominations with a progressive outlook. For it is his profound conviction that the world needs nothing more than systems of religion—but they must be such as can be accepted "not merely out of respect for old traditions and for lack of something better, but honestly and earnestly; faiths that can be woven into the pattern of life and determine the conduct of ordinary men; and can do this because they are believed by the enlightened mind as true."

Plants of the Bible

By H. N. & A. L. Moldenke

(Chronica Botanica Co., Waltham, Mass., \$7.50)
(William Dawson & Sons, Ltd., London)

For a book to appeal equally to the Bible student and the gardening enthusiast, it must be something quite out of the ordinary run of publications. This book by Mr. and Mrs. Moldenke is indeed in a class by itself. A catalogue description of it as a "comprehensive survey of the plants and plant products mentioned in the Bible" would be accurate, but totally inadequate. It is so much more than that.

Interest in Biblical botany is long-standing. Nearly 400 years ago Lemmens published the first known "Bible flora," and since then many others have followed, some of them the results of long and patient investigation in Biblical lands. The present volume is not so much an attempt to bring earlier works up-to-date, as an entirely new investigation, avoiding many of the inevitable errors of the earlier writers.

How easy it is for us to jump to the conclusion that the plants mentioned in

the Bible whose names are familiar to us are the same plants that we know in our own gardens and hedgerows. How easy, but how mistaken! The trouble began with the early texts and translations, whose authors were no botanists, and confusion was worse confounded with later translations into modern languages. We may find a single Biblical plant given many different, and common, names in different modern translations, or even in different chapters of the same version. Perhaps an extreme example is Nahum 2: 3 where *sir trees* (Authorised Version) became *cypress spears, chargers, horses, and drivers*, in other English translations!

What, then, were the "lilies of the field," or the lilies of the Song of Solomon; the gourd which grew up to shelter Jonah, (certainly not the English "pumpkin"), or the "crown of thorns"? The authors cannot, of course, tell us with certainty, every time, but they can tell us the most likely possibilities, and guard us against glaring errors—errors of false identification with plants of the same name in our own country, or with present-day Palestinian plants, which, however, are in many cases not native and could not have been there in Biblical times.

But the pleasure of the book is not so much its approach to scientific accuracy, as the general interest in its theme. This is enhanced by the well-drawn illustrations, and by the charming stories and legends which have grown up around some of the plants.

One word of criticism, and one of amusement. The criticism is, perhaps, of something that is unavoidable—that Latin classifications are so firmly established in botany that the whole book is arranged under an alphabetical list of (to the layman) unfamiliar titles—*Lawsonia inermis* L. (camphire); *Lecanora affinis* Eversm. (manna); *Lens esculenta* Moench (lentils). How much better if the arrangement could have been under the familiar Biblical names! A comprehensive index, however, helps to put matters right.

The amusement must be forgiven by American authors and publishers, of an English reviewer—the book is said to be rendered "in everyday English as it is spoken in America today."

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FROM

The

Council of Christians and Jews

KINGSWAY CHAMBERS,
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Finally, a speculation—will anyone in England, or any Churches, be inspired, as some in America have been, to create a "Biblical garden?" Or does one already exist here? We should be interested to know.

Jew and Greek: A Study of the Primitive Church

By Dom Gregory Dix
(Dacre Press, 12s. 6d.)

To fit history into a pattern is an ambition to which historians can easily succumb. But when the known facts are distorted, omitted and misrepresented in order to fit into the pattern, it becomes the worst of all sins which he can commit, and the more brilliant the pattern, and the more persuasive the writing, the worse the sin. This work of Dom Gregory Dix, posthumously published, is brilliant, fascinating, and at times extremely penetrating. But its author has fallen deeply into the seduction of fitting his story into a preconceived pattern which does scant justice to the Greek, and by no means scant injustice to the Jew.

The Greek and the "Syriac" cultures are throughout contrasted in terms of absolutes and this enables the author entirely to ignore the centuries during which Alexandria was a meeting place of Greek and Jewish thought, and every diaspora synagogue a place of meeting between local Jews and "God-fearing" Gentiles. He goes so far as to say (p. 76) that "The Jewish Septuagint version of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek was available for Jewish-Christians to use, but it certainly had not prepared the way for them in the Greek mind before they used it."

In order to fit into his chosen pattern, the whole striving of Judaism for "righteousness" in personal and social conduct is dismissed as "lofty moralism." Thereby he is enabled to present Johannine Christology as the only natural end product of "Syriac" (i.e. Jewish) religious experience. Naturally there is no reference to any association in the Jewish mind between the Messianic King and the Messianic age of righteousness. With similar indifference to reality, by identifying

the Greek word *kosmos* with the Hebrew idea of "creation" he is enabled to deduce that all Greek attempts to express belief in a divine spirit in the universe are just "humanism," as opposed to the Syriac explanation of creation from a Creator. But since the Greek word *kosmos* does not mean creation but the totality of what really exists, Greeks, if they sought for understanding of a Creator or ruling spirit, naturally included such within the idea of a *Kosmos*. The antithesis of Dom Gregory Dix is, from the beginning, a false one, even though he attaches to it many profound and true observations. Such must, in fact, be the verdict on the whole book. So many wise and original intuitions and observations are fitted into so false a total picture that the book as a whole can only mislead. It is a pity; but it must be said quite clearly that it is not along such lines that any true understanding of the relations between Christianity and its parent, Judaism, can be achieved.

World against Want

(United Nations Publication, 3s. 9d.)

This booklet contains a short report of the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme, showing what has been done since July 1950 in helping the peoples of nearly a hundred different countries or territories of the world to overcome their problems of disease, hunger and poverty. The scale of the programme is all too small (its annual budget is only about £7 m.) but its results are impressive. The difficulties with which the United Nations is faced in the political field sometimes blind us to its real achievements in practical co-operation on common problems. Here is, indeed, one outstanding example of what can be achieved when the nations of the world get together in a joint enterprise, for the funds of the Programme were contributed by sixty-nine different Governments, and experts of sixty-four nationalities took part in the field work.

The booklet is based on the Fifth Report of the Technical Assistance Board. It is attractively illustrated with charts and photographs.

Walls are Crumbling

By John M. Osterreicher

With a foreword by Jacques Maritain

(Hollis & Carter, 30s, 0d.)

The key to this remarkable book is to be found in a chance comment which occurs in a description of Max Picard before the time of his conversion—"a true Jew is a Christian unborn." The author who is an avowed propagandist of Roman Catholic doctrine sets out to show that the ultimate destiny for the sons of Israel is acceptance within the fold of the "true Church." This theme is illustrated by an analysis of the views and heart searchings of seven European Jewish Philosophers—they include the outstanding name of Henri Bergson—who came finally to accept the Christian faith and in some cases were baptised.

The events which led up to their conversion were different in each case but the seven had one feature in common which may in part account for it. None of them appears to have had a genuine grounding in Jewish religious belief or practice. In fact, Judaism as a spiritual force is almost ignored in this book. On the rare occasions of its mention it is somewhat summarily dismissed, as in the following conversation reported to have been held between Edith Stein and her mother after a synagogue service. "The sermon was beautiful, Edith, was it not?" "Yes, indeed, mother." "So one *can* be devout as a Jew?" "Certainly—if one has never met anything else."

Apart from the religious motif running through this book it treats of a wide variety of subjects which specially interested the minds of those seven thinkers. Much of this is difficult to follow except for those who have had some philosophical training. To the ordinary reader it is the biographical portion of the book which will appeal most readily, especially those heart-rending scenes which accompanied the Nazi revolution. In so far as it depicts the reaction of sensitive intellectuals to the wave of barbarism that swept over Europe, the book adds something important to the literature that has grown up around the name of Adolf Hitler.

English Literature and the Hebrew Renaissance

Professor Maurice Farbridge, author of "English Literature and the Hebrew Renaissance," comments on the review of his book in the last issue of "Common Ground":—

"Far from trying to 'resist the view that art and literature know no frontiers' (as attributed to me by your reviewer), my view as expressed in the book is the very reverse. Implicit throughout the book is an emphasis on the international and universal aspects of art and literature over against their racial and national aspects. In Chapter I, I point out that 'The fundamental principle of all literature is that a common humanity underlies our individual personalities.' This view is further developed in later chapters."

Our reviewer comments:—"The general impression created by the book emphasises the 'ethnicism' of literature—a perfectly tenable view."

JACQUES HEIM



Craven 'A' for smooth,
clean smoking

